

49
SPEECH

OF

HON. C. M. CONRAD, OF LOUISIANA,

ON THE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE IN RELATION TO CALIFORNIA.

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1850.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED AT THE CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE OFFICE.

1850.

JOHN W. CONNOR'S SPEECHES



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from

This project is made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services as administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries

CALIFORNIA AND NEW MEXICO.

Mr. CONRAD addressed the committee as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: So many gentlemen have preceded me in this debate, and the discussion has taken so wide a range, that I do not rise with the hope or expectation of presenting anything new to the consideration of the committee. But the question before us is one in which my constituents feel deeply interested, and I consider it due both to them and to myself to state as briefly as I can the principles by which I shall be guided.

Before doing so, however, I must be permitted to say that, in my opinion, the importance, not of the question itself, but of the action of Congress upon it, has been greatly exaggerated. Any one who would witness the heat and excitement that pervades this assembly whenever this subject is before it, would naturally conclude that the question whether slavery should or should not exist throughout all time in that vast region of country which we acquired from Mexico, would depend upon the result of our deliberations. But such is not the fact. Sir, there is a law-maker whose power is supreme—whose decrees cannot be controlled by human enactments. That law-maker is Nature. If, from the nature of this country, its climate, its soil, its position, its productions, it is adapted to slavery, slavery will assuredly find its way there—anything we may say or do to the contrary notwithstanding. If, on the contrary, it be not adapted to slavery—if slaves would be unprofitable there, then no legislation could permanently establish it. It must be recollected that any laws we may enact in regard to this territory would become inoperative as soon as the country ceased to be under our control, and that as soon as State governments are organized there, they would in this, as in all other matters, be governed by their own views of their own interests.

Now, sir, I must candidly confess that I have long since come reluctantly to the conclusion, that nature has decided this question against the South. What is the general character of this country? Why, sir, if the map of the world were spread before you, I doubt whether you could place your finger on a spot of the habitable globe, where, in an equal extent of territory, there is so small a proportion of fertile, or even cultivable soil. All accounts concur in representing it as a land of rocks and of deserts—of arid plains and snow-capped mountains—a large portion of which is utterly uninhabitable; where the grizzly bear perishes with the cold, and the

wolfe with hunger, and the remainder can only be sparsely inhabited. A country so remarkably deficient in water, so destitute of animal and vegetable life, that the hardy pioneer that attempts to traverse it, is exposed at every step to perish for want of sustenance and water. In order to show that this picture is not overcharged, allow me to read a brief extract from a work prepared, I believe, under the direction of the War Department, and published by order of Congress. I mean the notes of a military reconnoissance from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California, by Lieut. Col. W. H. Emory. At pp. 98 and 99 of this work, we read the following passage:

"The country, from the Arkansas to this point, more than 1,200 miles, in its adaptation to agriculture, has peculiarities which must forever stamp itself upon the population which inhabits it. All of North Mexico, embracing New Mexico, Chihuahua, Sonora, and the Californias, as far North as the Sacramento, are, as far as the best information goes, the same in the physical character of its surface, and differ but little in climate or products.

"In no part of this vast tract can the rains from heaven be relied upon, to any extent, for the cultivation of the soil. The earth is destitute of trees, and in great part also of any vegetation whatever.

"A few feeble streams flow in different directions from the great mountains, which in many places traverse this region. These streams are separated, sometimes by plains, and sometimes by mountains, without water and without vegetation, and may be called deserts, so far as they perform any useful part in the sustenance of animal life.

"The cultivation of the earth is, therefore, confined to those narrow strips of land which are within the level of the waters of the streams, and wherever practised in a community with any success, or to any extent, involves a degree of subordination, and absolute obedience to a chief, repugnant to the habits of our people.

"The chief who directs the time and the quantity of the precious irrigating water must be implicitly obeyed by the whole community. A departure from his orders, by the waste of water, or unjust distribution of it, or neglect to make the proper embankments, may endanger the means of subsistence of many people. He must, therefore, be armed with power to punish promptly and immediately.

"The profits of labor are too inadequate for the existence of negro slavery. Slavery, as practised by the Mexicans, under the form of peonage, which enables their master to get the services of the adult white in the prime of life, without the obligation of rearing him in infancy, supporting him in old age, or maintaining his family, affords no data for estimating the profits of slave labor, as it exists in the United States.

"No one who has ever visited this country, and who is acquainted with the character and value of slave labor in the United States, would ever think of bringing his own slaves here with any view to profit, much less would he purchase slaves for such a purpose. Their labor here, if they could be retained as slaves, among peons, nearly of their own color, would never repay the cost of transportation, much less the additional purchase money."

This, sir, is the opinion of an intelligent and

scientific officer, formed upon personal observation of the country; and this opinion is confirmed by all I have ever read or heard of the country.

If this opinion be correct, it would be about as easy to introduce the culture of the cotton and sugar plants on the parched plains and the snow-covered mountains of this country, as permanently to establish slavery there. For these reasons, from the moment that the acquisition of this territory was first suggested—from the moment that the cry “of indemnity for the past and security for the future,” first went forth from the White House, and was caught up and reëchoed as a war-cry, by a powerful party in this country, I was satisfied that this “indemnity” would be no indemnity—this “security” anything but a security to the South; and I said then, I have ever since said, and I say now, that I would willingly give Mexico twice as much to take back the country as it cost us. Even the discovery of the gold region in California did not reconcile me to the acquisition; for experience has shown, that it matters little who owns the soil that contains the precious metals, or by whose hands they are excavated, as they will ultimately find their way where the ever-rolling tide of commerce carries them. In fact, the history of Spain, when she possessed nearly all the gold and silver mines in the world, and in more modern times, of Mexico herself, prove, that the country that owns the mines, often gets the smallest portion of their products.

The only portion of this territory that we did need, was an harbor or two on the Pacific, which might have been purchased at a trifling cost, and the government of which would not have exposed the country to all the agitation and excitement which this question has produced.

But we are told by gentlemen from the North, as an excuse for the pertinacity with which they adhere to their purpose, that a great principle is involved in the question. True, sir, there is a principle involved in it—an important principle, but it is a principle in the preservation of which the South is more directly interested than the North. That principle is the absolute exemption of the subject of slavery in all its bearings and under all circumstances, from the control of the General Government—a principle, the rigid maintenance of which is indispensable to the security of the South, and to the harmony of the Union. All that is demanded by the South is, that this principle should remain inviolate. We do not ask that Congress should so legislate as to force slavery into this territory *invitâ naturâ*, and against the wishes of its inhabitants. All that we ask, all that we insist on, is, that you should not interpose your authority to prevent slavery from being introduced into the country, or to abolish it if, as some suppose, it already exists there. Is there anything unjust or unreasonable in this demand?

Mr. Chairman, I, for one, deny that Congress has the constitutional power to interfere in this matter; and even if they had the constitutional, I deny that they have the moral power.

I shall not undertake to examine at length the question whether Congress possesses the power to establish territorial governments, and if it has, what are the proper limits of that power. The time to which, by the rules of the House, I am compelled to limit my remarks, would prevent my doing so even if I deemed it advisable. But this

task has been so often performed by abler men that I would consider it a work of supererogation to attempt it.

I will observe, however, that few constitutional lawyers of the present day who affirm the existence of this power, would venture to base this affirmation on that provision of the Constitution where it has been usually sought, viz: art. 4, sec. 3d, which empowers Congress “to dispose of, and make all needful rules and regulations respecting, the territory or other property belonging to the United States.” If any doubt remained on this point, it has been removed by the able speech recently delivered by a distinguished Senator from Michigan, [Mr. Cass,] who has clearly shown that this clause in the Constitution does not even afford a decent pretext for the exercise of the power. I differ from that gentleman in many important questions, but I take this opportunity to declare that, for the independent stand he has taken on this question and the ability with which he has maintained it, he deserves the gratitude and respect not of the South only, but of every friend of the Union.

I am aware, sir, that this power has been sought for by some in other clauses of the Constitution. Some have affirmed that the power to govern territory was a necessary consequence of the power to acquire it. But when they are asked where the power to acquire territory is found, they say that is also a necessary consequence of the power “to declare war.” Thus, sir, one of the most important prerogatives of this Government, the power to govern at discretion, and for an unlimited period, a country far exceeding in extent the thirteen original States, is made the consequence of a consequence—the derivative of a derivative.

Gentlemen whose opinions are entitled to respect have derived this power from other sources, but I have always thought that their arguments proved little except the ingenuity of those that used them. Is it probable indeed that, in an instrument so carefully framed, so deliberately discussed, as the Constitution of the United States, if it had been intended to convey a power so important as the one in question, it would not have been done directly and in plain unequivocal language? Is it probable that it would have been suffered to lurk in an ambiguous phrase, to be inferred from other powers, or to be formed like a piece of patchwork, by stitching together detached portions of the Constitution? I do not believe it. I believe it is a *casus omissus*, occasioned probably by the fact that at the time the Constitution was adopted the General Government owned no territory except the northwest, the government of which was already provided for by the compact between the State of Virginia and the Confederation, which compact was ratified and confirmed by article six of the Constitution.

It is urged that this power has been so often exercised that it is now too late to deny its existence.

No one has more respect for well established precedents than I have. The maxim “*stare decisis*” is more important, when applied to interpretations of the fundamental law which defines the powers and prescribes the duties of government, than when applied to merely municipal laws which regulate the rights and duties of individuals. But this maxim is less applicable to legislative than to

judicial decisions. Now, in this matter, although there are some decisions which seem to recognize the existence of the power, there is none which directly affirms it.

Even the Congressional precedents are by no means conclusive. In the case of Missouri, it was settled by compromise, and in the case of Oregon, the country being confessedly not adapted to slavery, it excited little interest.

I conclude, therefore, that the power to establish a territorial government is nowhere to be found in the Constitution.

But does it follow from this circumstance that Congress is absolutely without power to provide any government whatever for a territory owned by the United States? I think not.

Whenever in a judicial proceeding it is discovered that great mischief or great injustice would result from the want of power to do a thing, tribunals, in the exercise of a sound discretion, frequently decide that it must be done *ex necessitate rei*—from the necessity of the case. So in countries governed by a constitution, particularly a written constitution—which furnishes an inflexible rule of conduct—the government often finds it necessary to exercise powers which, though not warranted by any express provision of the Constitution, are nevertheless in accordance with its general spirit and object. The British ministry not unfrequently exercise powers not vested in them by law, relying upon the justice of Parliament to relieve them from the responsibility of their acts. In our own country acts have several times been done under the plea of necessity, and that, too, when the validity of the plea was, to say the least, extremely questionable. I hold that there is less danger in a government's assuming power admitted not to belong to it, whenever, by the exercise of such powers, a great national object will be attained or a great national calamity averted, than to seek to justify such usurpation of power by perverting the language of the Constitution from its plain and obvious import.

Now, sir, to apply these principles. The Government is in the possession of an extensive region of country. The soil forms a part of its domain. It has the undoubted right to "*dispose of it, and to make all needful rules and regulations respecting it,*" considered as *property*; but it has no express power to govern the inhabitants of this territory. Must they be left to govern themselves as they see fit, or must they be left in a state of anarchy? No, the first course would defeat the rights of the Government, the second would be contrary both to morals and to humanity. It is clear, then, that upon the principle of self-preservation the Government may establish laws over a people so situated. But the necessity which is the origin of this power must be the measure of its extent. In order to ascertain what we rightfully may do, we must ascertain what is absolutely necessary to be done.

Now, it is clear that it is not at all necessary for us to dictate a permanent organic law to the inhabitants of a territory. It is not necessary permanently to establish or to force upon them a system of domestic polity which, however it may please us, may be very unsuitable or unpalatable to them. It is not necessary to convert a territory into a *corpus vile*, to make all sorts of political experiments upon. It is not necessary to force

the inhabitants to adopt our peculiar notions of philanthropy or morality any more than our peculiar tenets of religion; and we have no more right to prohibit the institution of slavery in a territory than we have to prohibit the institution of marriage. All that is requisite for the protection of the inhabitants and of our own interests, and, consequently, all that we have the power to do, is to make a few simple laws to protect them in the enjoyment of "life, liberty, and property;" to establish tribunals to enforce those laws, and to provide in due time for the legal and regular adoption, by the inhabitants, of such a system of government as they may prefer, with the single restriction that it be republican in its form. This is all that is necessary to be done, and therefore all that we have a right to do. The Constitution confers on us no power to do more, and there is no necessity to warrant the assumption of the power.

But, sir, suppose that I am in error on this point. Suppose you have the *constitutional* power to prohibit slavery in a territory: have you, in the present instance, the *moral* power? In other words, is it right, is it fair, is it honest, that you should exercise the power?

This territory was acquired, partly by war, partly by purchase. It was won by the valor and paid for with the treasure of the *whole* country. What right, therefore, has any portion of the country to assume the entire control and management of it? What right has it to impose any restrictions or limitations upon the full and free enjoyment of it by the other portion? Either this country is adapted to slavery, or it is not. If it be adapted to slavery, the prohibition is obviously an injury, not only to all the States in which slavery exists, but to the inhabitants of the territory itself. If, on the other hand, it be not adapted to slavery, then the prohibition is worse than an injury; it is a wanton, unprovoked, gratuitous insult; and, permit me to say, that a generous and high-spirited people may forgive and forget an injury, but an *insult* they cannot overlook.

Men of the North, is there any principle that requires of you to inflict upon us this injury or to offer us this insult? No, there is none. There can be none! What is the true principle? What is the principle that you ought to contend for? It is, that you should not interfere at all in this matter. It is, that the people of these territories be left to determine the question of slavery and all other questions of purely domestic policy according to their own views of their own interest. This is not a southern or a northern principle. It is an American principle. It is the principle of the right of man to self-government—a principle proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence and consecrated in every line of the Constitution.

Sir, it is true that this country is a conquered country, but the people who are destined to occupy it are not a conquered race. No, they will be, for the most part at least, emigrants from the United States—men who have been nurtured at the breasts of American mothers—who have imbibed the feelings and the principles of American fathers, and who, depend upon it, will claim to exercise all the rights of American citizens. They will therefore indignantly repel any attempt on your part to interfere with their domestic institutions.

If these positions be correct, it was clearly the duty of the last Congress to establish territorial governments over this country. And if it was *their* duty then, it is equally *our* duty now. We are bound to afford the inhabitants of this country protection for their lives and property. We are bound to do this not only by every principle of justice and humanity, but by an express provision of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, by which we acquired it: the 9th article of which stipulates, that until the inhabitants of this country are incorporated into the Union, "they shall be maintained and protected in the full enjoyment of their liberty and property"—a stipulation which we have thus far entirely disregarded.

But the inhabitants of California, finding that Congress had neglected to provide them with a government, have organized one for themselves, and now claim to be admitted into the Union. The question is now submitted to us whether or not this demand shall be acceded to.

Before examining this question, allow me to say a few words in relation to the manner in which this constitution has been adopted. Several gentlemen on the other side have severely censured the people of California for daring to adopt a constitution without having been authorized by Congress to do so. It has been called an act of rebellion, of revolution, a *pronunciamiento*, and the President of the United States, for having countenanced, or not having opposed this unwarrantable proceeding, has been charged with being *particeps criminis*, and with having actually headed a rebellion against himself.

In relation to this charge I shall merely state, that that is a very strange revolution which consists not in overturning an established government, but in establishing one where none existed before, and that that is a singular rebellion which consists not in opposing or resisting a government, but, on the contrary, in tendering an immediate and voluntary submission to it, in swearing allegiance to it, and in soliciting to be allowed to participate in its administration.

In my opinion, sir, the people of California have acted wisely in preferring a government, however irregularly constituted, to no government at all, and the President, in affording every encouragement to the accomplishment of this object, has done no more than his duty.

It has been more than insinuated by several gentlemen over the way, that not only was this convention gotten up by direction of the President, but that the constitution was dictated by him.

It might be considered a sufficient answer to this charge to state, that it is entirely unsupported by evidence, whether in the official documents that have been laid before us, or in the unofficial accounts we have received from that country. But we need not be satisfied with negative proof—we have evidence of a positive character.

As regards the origin of this plan, candor compels me to say that the merit of originating it belongs exclusively to the late Administration, and that it is one of the few wise and judicious measures for which the country is indebted to it.

This is clearly shown by the official documents transmitted to us by the President, and is confirmed by private accounts.

As regards any interference by the President in

the deliberations of the convention that framed the constitution, it is denied both by himself, by the gentleman through whom this influence is said to have been exerted, and, I am told, by the gentlemen who have been chosen Senators and Representatives, most, if not all of whom were members of the convention.

And now let me ask how it is that the President should have had sufficient influence to get up this convention and to prescribe to them what sort of a constitution they should adopt, and yet not be able to procure the election of a single member in either House favorable to his administration? I leave to gentlemen who have more ingenuity than I possess, to reconcile this discrepancy.

I have no doubt, therefore, Mr. Chairman, that the convention that framed this constitution was fairly convened, and that the constitution itself was fairly adopted—at all events it was ratified by an overwhelming majority of the people of California, (I believe more than 12,000 out of 13,000.) If, therefore, it contain no provisions contrary to the Constitution or laws, or to the rights and interests of the United States, I am perfectly willing they should live under it, at least until we shall have provided them with a government.

But the question now arises, shall California be admitted into the Union with this constitution? This is a very different question from the first one. Whether California shall be permitted to govern herself is one thing—whether she shall be permitted in part to govern us, is another, and quite a different thing. Let us remember, in the first place, that this is not a question between California and the United States, but entirely between the States themselves, and to be decided exclusively with reference to our interest and convenience. California has, unquestionably, no right to demand an admission into this Union. We are under no obligation, we have given no pledge, either express or implied, to admit her. There is, in fact, no such organized or political body as California. There was a Mexican province of that name which we have acquired; and since its acquisition by us multitudes of adventurers have flocked to it, not only from the United States, but from Europe, from South America, from Mexico, from the Islands in the Pacific, and even from the opposite continent of Asia, have taken possession of the country, and are helping themselves very unceremoniously to all the gold they can pick up. We have, with a liberality unparalleled, permitted this; but does it follow that on that account we are bound to confer on this promiscuous multitude any political powers or privileges? Have they any right to complain if we refuse to do this? Are we not sufficiently liberal when, after they have gorged themselves with gold, we permit them either to return to their respective homes or to remain in the country and govern themselves?

Viewing the question, then, as one to be decided exclusively with reference to our own interests, I ask the gentlemen who advocate the admission of California, to inform us what possible advantage we will derive from her admission? What end will be promoted by it? Are we not competent to govern ourselves, without the aid of California? Sir, I have yet to hear the first argument in favor of this measure, and there are many against it.

In the first place, all must admit, that the proceedings by which this Constitution was adopted,

were, to say the least, extremely irregular. The convention that framed it, not being authorized by Congress, had no legal existence; and the Constitution adopted by it is, so far as we are concerned, a blank piece of paper. They have adopted such boundaries for their State as suited their pleasure. Is any one here prepared to say whether those boundaries are such as we ought to approve?

The Constitution of the United States (art. 1, sec. 2) declares, that Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, and provides for an enumeration of the inhabitants of each State, with a view to this apportionment. No enumeration has been made of the population of California. Is any one here prepared to say that she has a population of actual, *bonâ fide* residents sufficient to entitle her to admission as a State? If there be, he has been more fortunate in obtaining information than I have been; for I have sought to obtain it, and the accounts I receive are very contradictory. My own opinion is, that she has not that population. At all events, if such be the fact, we have no evidence of it. Thus, sir, we are called upon to admit into the Union a country of yesterday; to give her as much weight in the other House as the largest State in this Union, and as much weight in this body as some of the smallest, without any evidence whatever that her population is sufficient to entitle her to admission; we are called upon to allow her two Representatives, when it is exceedingly doubtful whether she be entitled to one. We are called upon not only to put her upon an equality with the other States, but to give her a preference over them, since we assign her a larger representation than she is entitled to. I cannot consent to do this. I might overlook matters of form, but I cannot sanction a proceeding which, in my opinion, would be a violation of every principle and a departure from every precedent relating to the admission of States into the Union, and their representation on this floor.

Why is it that certain gentleman manifest such extreme anxiety for the admission of California? Why is that they are impatient of the ordinary forms of legislation that retard her entrance? Why is it that they will not await the solemnities of marriage, but rush with indecent haste into the illegitimate embraces of their favorite? How comes it that those very gentlemen who have heretofore pertinaciously opposed every attempt to give California a territorial government are now striving to convert her suddenly into a sovereign State of this Confederacy? Sir, I can tell you why it is. It is because her constitution contains a clause of about four lines—a clause prohibiting slavery. If the constitution had contained a provision of an opposite character—if it had tolerated instead of prohibiting slavery—or even if it had been silent on the subject, these same gentlemen would have been found opposing her admission as vehemently as they are now advocating it.

For my own part I declare with the utmost sincerity, that if I oppose her admission into the Union it is not because she has prohibited slavery within her borders. I recognize to the fullest extent the right of her people to regulate this matter according to their own wishes. I have no doubt that if the question were again submitted to the people their decision would be the same, and the longer the vote is postponed the more decisive it

will be, from the fact that nine-tenths of the persons who emigrate to that country will always be from foreign countries or from non-slaveholding States of this Union.

Some gentlemen suppose that the immediate admission of California would tend to calm the excitement growing out of this question. But this is a fatal mistake. My opinion is that it would produce the very opposite result. Suppose a quarrel to have arisen between two men about the division of a loaf, and one were first to appropriate one-half of it to himself and then prepare to struggle for the remaining half, would such a proceeding tend to promote a fair division or an amicable settlement? If parties cannot agree upon a fair compromise of the question with an equality of votes in the Senate, is it probable that an addition of two votes to one side would make the party that received this addition to its strength more apt to listen to reasonable terms? I think not.

If, therefore, the admission of California is proposed as a distinct and isolated measure, unconnected with any other as a counterpoise, I shall vote against it; but if it were made the basis of a compromise, if it were offered as one of several conditions, (whether embraced in one bill or in several is immaterial,) looking to a full, fair, and honorable settlement of the question, I would cheerfully waive my objections to the measure. But I want the whole question growing out of this newly-acquired territory to be finally settled. I wish to leave no fragments behind for demagogues and fanatics to fatten upon between this and the next election. Every day adds to the difficulty of a satisfactory adjustment of it. The debate that is carried on here is certainly not of a character to calm the public excitement. It has, with few exceptions, consisted entirely of vehement appeals to sectional prejudices, of mutual attacks and recriminations, of invidious comparisons between the North and the South; and gentlemen have exhausted all their powers of eloquence to magnify the greatness and glories of their own States at the expense of others. Even the triumphs of our arms have been made the subject of angry controversy, and every State has her champion here, prepared to vindicate her claims to superior valor.

Sir, who doubts the courage of any portion of the people of this country? We are one race—the same blood flows in our veins; and to question the courage of any would be to question the courage of all. Let us, on the field of battle, emulate each other in deeds of daring—that is a noble and generous rivalry—but when the battle has been fought and won, let us not engage in an ignoble strife for the division of the spoils and the glory.

I have heard a great deal in this debate about a dissolution of the Union. Some gentlemen seem to view the union as a sort of commercial partnership entered into for pecuniary profit, and which may be dissolved whenever any member finds it for his interest to dissolve it. The gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. CLINGMAN] has furnished us some valuable statistics on this subject, and has succeeded in proving, to my entire satisfaction, that, in the event of a dissolution, railroad iron might be purchased cheaper in his State than it now is. That gentleman might have been certain that a Yankee would not be out-done in calculation—accordingly a gentleman from Massachu-

setts [Mr. MANN] has furnished us some data for ascertaining, not exactly how much Massachusetts would gain by a dissolution of the Union, (that would be rather a difficult matter to show,) but how much damage that event would enable her to inflict on the southern States. That gentleman seems to think that

"Just so much she doth make,
As from another she can take."

The gist of his argument is, that in the event of a dissolution many more slaves might be kidnapped than there now are; and as that gentleman is said to have manifested a decided predilection for that department of business, I presume his calculations on that subject may be relied on as correct. I will say to him, however, that it was not by such calculations as these that the people of his State have acquired the reputation of being the shrewdest and most practical race on the face of the earth. That gentleman has obtained some celebrity in the country from his devotion to the cause of public education; and judging from the specimen he gave us the other day, I am inclined to believe that both the country and himself would be the gainers were he hereafter to confine his labors to the juvenile portion of the community.

For my own part, Mr. Chairman, I have made no such calculations, and do not intend to make them. I have not yet learned to estimate the value of this Union in dollars and cents. I keep no ledger and day book in which I enter the profits and loss of the Union; I have struck no balance sheet between the North and the South, to ascertain which would gain or lose by a dissolution. Is there no value in national greatness and national glory?—in the proud recollections of the past, in the bright hopes of the future? Is there no value in the proud attitude which this republic holds in the civilized world; in respect and admiration abroad—in peace, tranquillity, and repose at home? And have those gentlemen who are so fond of calculating the value of the Union reversed the

picture? Have they calculated also the countless calamities that would follow in the train of disunion?—the dissension and discord—the civil brawls—the attacks and reprisals—the border warfare,—the petty hostilities—all terminating at last in wars surpassing in duration and fierceness all that is recorded in the annals of civilized warfare—wars that would impoverish the North and desolate the fields of the South. To avert calamities like these, I would sacrifice everything save honor. If honor cannot be preserved without such a sacrifice, I am prepared to make it. But let no sordid calculations of interest mingle in the contest. No, if this Union should be dissolved—if that bright cluster of stars whose mild effulgence illuminates the darkest corners of the earth, guiding the persecuted and oppressed throughout the world to freedom, should ever sink to rise no more, let those by whose efforts such a catastrophe is produced be prepared to vindicate their course by an appeal to loftier feelings than those.

Do gentlemen who are so fond of calculating the value of the Union know where and by whom that expression was first employed? In the Farewell Address of the Father of his Country we find this sentence, which is so applicable to the present state of our affairs, that I need make no apology for reading it at length:

"It is of infinite moment, that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union, to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts."

This, sir, is the voice of Washington, speaking to us as it were from the tomb, and I for one will hearken to his admonitions.